

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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TO AMEMBASSY NASSAU PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 304682

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, CU, BF

SUBJECT: ALLEGED CONGESTION IN HAVANA HARBOR

REFERENCE: NASSAU 2151

1. REFTEL REQUESTED INFORMATION ON PRESENT SITUATION IN HAVANA HARBOR FOR POSSIBLE TRANSMISSION TO GCOB. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT CONGESTION IN HAVANA HARBOR IS NOT REPEAT NOT UNUSUAL GIVEN CUBA'S GREAT DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN SUPPLIES AND THE LARGE NUMBER OF FREIGHTERS INVOLVED IN LOADING AND UNLOADING ACTIVITIES. MOREOVER, WASHINGTON INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY INFORMS US THAT USUAL TRAFFIC CONGESTION WAS RECENTLY PERHAPS COMPOUNDED BY DECISION TO CLOSE HAVANA HARBOR BETWEEN 7 P.M. AND 7 A.M. FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD IN DECEMBER, BEFORE AND DURING THE FIRST CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS (DECEMBER 17-22). DECISION APPARENTLY TAKEN FOR SECURITY REASONS TO PREVENT CUBAN EXILES FROM DISRUPTING WORK OF CONGRESS. IN THE PAST THERE HAVE BEEN ISOLATED INSTANCES OF CUBAN EXILES
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TRYING TO DISRUPT IMPORTANT CEREMONIES BY FIRING FROM

SMALL VESSELS IN THE HARBOR IN QUOTE HIT AND RUN UNQUOTE
TYPE OF ACTION.

2. WHILE WE CANNOT COMPLETELY DISCOUNT POSSIBILITY THAT

PRESENCE OF EASTERN EUROPEAN FREIGHTERS ANCHORED OFF
BAHAMAS MAY BE RELATED TO CUBAN SEA LIFT TO ANGOLA, IT
IS FAR MORE LIKELY THAT SITUATION IN HAVANA HARBOR DES-
CRIBED BY RUSSELL (REFTEL) IS CAUSED BY CUBAN PRE-
CAUTIONARY SECURITY MEASURES RELATED TO PARTY CONGRESS.
ROBINSON

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